

HOW WE INSPIRED CHANGE

Groundwork MSSTT Impact Report
2015/16



GROUNDWORK
CHANGING PLACES
CHANGING LIVES



CHANGING PLACES CHANGING LIVES





Groundwork has been working with and supporting communities, businesses and local authorities in Greater Manchester and Lancashire since the early 1980s. The services we offer, the projects we deliver and the values that underpin all that we do are just as relevant to today's challenges as they were over three decades ago.

We have three clear aspirations that embody our commitment to helping individuals, neighbourhoods and employers achieve their potential and to live and work in a more sustainable way. Put simply, we want to:

> **Create better places...**

by supporting people to work together to make their surroundings greener, safer and healthier and get involved in the way decisions are made about services in their area.

> **Improve people's prospects...**

by increasing the confidence, skills, wellbeing and employability of those furthest removed from the labour market, especially young people.

> **Promote greener living and working...**

by helping people and businesses learn more about their environmental impact and act responsibly to reduce natural resource use and improve their health.

At a time when there is a fundamental shift taking place regarding the role of the state in the provision of local services, the ability of social enterprises and charities such as Groundwork to take action becomes even more important. We have to rise to the challenge of fundamentally changing the way we do business in order to generate more income, whilst retaining that vital Groundwork DNA that makes our work so effective.

In short, we're operating at a time when every pound we raise and spend needs to deliver as much value as possible given the reductions in public spending. Our fundamental aim in much of what we do is to prevent more challenging (and expensive) problems from arising in the first place.

We help keep people healthy and active through our local food growing programmes and by improving green spaces. Our Achievement Coaches ensure young people succeed in school so that they don't become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). We help people change their behaviour around energy and water so that they avoid financial hardship and fuel poverty and also play a part in minimising the impacts of climate change. We help businesses be more efficient, legally compliant and competitive.

I am delighted to share our 2015/16 Impact Report with you as a friend and supporter of Groundwork and as a way of highlighting just some of the brilliant work our staff teams have delivered. Thank you to those who have helped us in the last year and we look forward to building new relationships to enable us to do even more in the year ahead.

Mike Ormerod
Executive Director, Groundwork MSSTT



CREATING BETTER PLACES

2,642,000m²

of land improved or maintained

Groundwork helps people to organise and work together to protect, preserve, improve or create green spaces like parks, play areas, allotments and nature reserves – our vital green infrastructure. Hundreds of thousands of people get involved across the country each year, creating better places to play, grow, eat and meet.

In August 2015 we relocated to Trafford Ecology Park, our own green oasis, where we're creating a showcase of sustainable living and working in the heart of Trafford Industrial Park.

We also help people to create Friends Groups and mobilise support and funding for their local green spaces, such as at Queen's Park in North Manchester. We make sure young people get their voices heard about the facilities they need in their area and empower them to take action to improve their local environment. A great example of this is our Crumpsall youth group who have created their own facility in the centre of Crumpsall Park called the Pulse Youth Project.

“We are absolutely delighted with the natural play project designed and delivered by Groundwork – the equipment hugely enhances our outdoor area and fits really well within our Forest School environment. What sets Groundwork apart is the effort they make to engage with staff and parents, to understand our requirements and to then create an innovative, high-quality facility within agreed budgets.”

LINDA CONNELLY,
HEAD TEACHER, STAGHILLS NURSERY
SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE,
ROSSENDALE

Community action for ancient woodland

Bailey's Wood is one of Manchester's few remaining semi-natural ancient woodlands and we're getting the local community involved to help ensure it thrives for years to come. Working in partnership with Red Rose Forest (now known as City of Trees), The Conservation Volunteers and Northwards Housing, we're aiming to increase community ownership of the Wood and preserve and boost the biodiversity of this remnant of ancient forest in the heart of the city.

A woodland management programme and community activities have been developed with the help of families, school children, conservation volunteer groups, local businesses and even the intrepid local firemen!



Lots of learning, lots of play

Nineteen primary schools and nurseries across Manchester and East Lancashire have seen their school grounds transformed in 2015/16 thanks to our £150,000 school grounds improvement programme.

Our team uses Learning Through Landscapes™ principles to involve the whole school community in the design process, along with a commitment to sustainability, utilising reused and recycled materials for example. We have also provided support to access funding for capital works and helped schools embed outdoor education within their curriculum with help from our experienced education team.



A better environment for mental health care

We worked with the patients and staff at Fairfield Hospital in Bury to create a new open space for relaxation and therapy at their Adult Mental Health Unit – and we've seen dramatic results.

Early indications show a reduction in incidents of violence and aggression towards staff and patients by 43%-53% since the introduction of external therapies in the improved grounds, creating cost savings for the Unit and benefiting patients.

This backs up extensive research demonstrating the strong link between access to green space and our physical and mental health.



Groundwork believes that no-one should be disadvantaged because of where they live or because of their background. We want to stop talent and lives from being wasted due to long-term unemployment, a lack of aspiration or poor health and wellbeing.

We provide a range of projects and services to help people improve their prospects. We have a particular focus on inspiring young people who face challenging circumstances and disadvantage in order to raise their aspirations, build self-confidence and help them plan for their future. We've developed tried and tested services like Achievement Coaches, Be Enterprising and Alternative Curriculum which we provide alongside major national initiatives, such as Youth Contract and Talent Match.

Through our Blue Sky social enterprise, we provide a successful grounds maintenance service that is staffed by ex-offenders, providing on-the-job learning and real work, breaking the cycle of re-offending and challenging perceptions.

We also encourage healthy living through a number of community development programmes that engage people with their local area, educate in healthy eating and teach communities to be more resilient and sustainable for the long term.

**> IMPROVING
PEOPLE'S PROSPECTS**

2957

days of volunteering by
adults and young people



Learning through horticulture

We provide horticultural training to schools, colleges and within community settings. There's a nationwide shortage of skilled people to take up jobs in horticulture and land-based industries – and we find that working with plants can impact wellbeing and life skills too.

We've provided over 300 hours of horticulture training this year to a group of students at Loreto Sixth Form College in North Manchester, leading to a City & Guilds Level 1 Award in Practical Horticulture. The students also almost doubled their 'soft skills' assessment scores over the academic year.

We've also worked with schools, including training up staff at Moorside High to grow plants, maintain their growing area and develop growing plans that can be delivered with pupils.



Paula's story

Paula lives in a residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre in Salford. Groundwork visits the centre once a week to teach residents horticultural and life skills to help them on their journey to recovery.

"I've always had an interest in gardening so it's been great having a teacher. What I'm taught on a Tuesday afternoon I'll practise in the garden all week, whether that's tending to the planters or growing vegetables. I find gardening very relaxing. It helps me to stay occupied and stops me thinking about other things. It's great when I look out the window and see what I've achieved. Sometimes I just go outside and look at it. It makes me happy."

"I'm due to leave the centre in three weeks. I'll only be round the corner and I'll come back and visit, but I've left instructions for the other residents who will be looking after the garden! The garden has brought out a determination in me; I've started something so I want to finish it. I've recently applied for two horticultural assistant jobs which I'm due to hear about soon."

"Having the focus of the garden is helping me on my road to recovery – it's my sanctuary!"

Achievement in Crumpsall

For more than three years we've been giving intensive support to groups of young people in Crumpsall to help them gain more control over their own lives. It's involved Achievement Coaching in Abraham Moss High School, the delivery of social enterprise training and helping enterprising young people set up their own youth club, the Pulse Youth Project in Crumpsall Park.

In 2015/16 we mentored 26 young people through the Achievement Coaches programme. Abraham Moss High School has reported that those pupils who have taken part in the Achievement Coaches scheme have seen an increase in progression of over 40% in key subjects such as Maths, English and Science.

We also supported the young people to increase attendance at the Pulse by 65%. Activities at the youth club include cookery, craft, sewing, social action activities and volunteering, as well as developing skills around debating, report writing and critical thinking.





“Fab work as always... We have just received a compliment for the workmanship you have completed here. Please can you pass this on to the lads who completed the works and tell them a big well done.”

KAREN JONES, MAINTENANCE SURVEYOR, YOUR HOUSING, COMMENTING ON BLUE SKY NORTH

Blue Sky North

Blue Sky North employs ex-offenders on full-time six-month contracts to work on a landscaping and site maintenance team. We're the northern franchise of Blue Sky Development & Regeneration – the acclaimed ex-offender led social enterprise.

We secure landscape construction, fencing and grounds maintenance contracts from public, private and voluntary sector clients. 47% of employees progress into onward employment in the wider labour market and Blue Sky has a re-offending rate of 15%, a quarter of the national average.

During 2015/16 we employed 17 ex-offenders and have carried out work for a wide variety of housing associations, including Northwards Housing, Your Housing, New Charter, and Stockport Homes.



Tom's story

In 2015/16 we provided extra support to local young offenders through the Greater Manchester Talent Match programme (funded by the Big Lottery Fund and managed by GMCVO). The scheme allows us to employ a Talent Coach to provide intensive coaching, mentoring and advocacy to ten unemployed young people – and this year they worked solely with young people with a criminal record.

Tom had been in prison and lacked opportunities and experience. Tameside Spotlight Team, which provides support to local offenders, referred him to Talent Match. Along with six others, he gained a job with the support of our Talent Coach, which was double our target for the year.

Tom's employment was a construction operative apprenticeship with our Blue Sky North team. He feels that this has given him a fresh start and real prospects he did not have before, and that without the structure and routine he may have re-offended and returned to prison.

Tom comments: *“This job [with Blue Sky North] has turned my life around. Without the job it's likely I would have gone back to crime. I now have my own real money earned legally.”*



Climate change is now a global emergency. Every month during 2016 has seen a new record high temperature set for that month. Groundwork is committed to helping people and organisations take action to deliver both practical benefits now and sow the seeds of a more sustainable future.

This year saw recent extreme flooding events in both Manchester and Lancashire, underlining the need for everyone to work together to reduce carbon emissions and adapt our neighbourhoods to a warmer future.

The Greater Manchester Low Carbon Pledge calls for climate change action to be part of the Greater Manchester way of life to create a better city-region for everyone. We are helping businesses become more sustainable and in the process benefiting by avoiding waste, cutting costs and improving the wellbeing of their employees. In neighbourhoods our Green Doctors help people manage their money better, heat their homes properly and avoid winter illnesses.

GREENER LIVING & WORKING

476

home visits carried out by our expert Green Doctors

“This service has really helped and supported the disadvantaged families I work with. They found it very helpful and useful and the advice that has been given will help them to save money from their electric and gas bills. The families can now understand the budget they have left on the meter and are working towards this, and realising where they are using more electric and how they can save it.”

YASMIN AKHTAR, EARLY HELP PRACTITIONER, MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL



Helping vulnerable people stay warm and well

Our Green Doctors are independent, impartial experts who give homes a check-up then offer energy-saving advice. They help people to take control of their energy bills and reduce their environmental impact at the same time.

Supported by British Gas Energy Trust and Southway Housing, they have targeted the elderly and those at risk of worsening chronic health conditions through living in cold, damp environments. Green Doctors have carried out energy surveys and prescribed and installed basic energy-saving measures. They've helped people apply for grants, switch providers to cheaper tariffs and offered detailed action plans to help tenants save hundreds of pounds.

This year we've provided advice and staying well tips to almost 500 vulnerable households across the city. An average potential annual saving of £615 was identified per household – and we've had 100% positive feedback from tenants.

161

businesses supported by our Sustainable Business Consultants

Addressing water quality

We have worked in partnership with the Environment Agency to engage 30 businesses based on some of the most polluting industrial estates in Greater Manchester. Urban diffuse pollution from these estates has a significant impact on water quality in Manchester's rivers. Our consultants conducted a scoping exercise across 15 industrial estates, followed up with on-site reviews at targeted high-risk sites. We worked with the businesses to identify legal issues, key risks and propose mitigation measures.

When we revisited we found that 91% of legal breaches had been rectified or were in the process of being, and that 68% of our best practice recommendations were already implemented or in the planning stages.

Supporting Greater Manchester business

Our team of Sustainable Business Consultants have supported over 150 businesses, large and small, this year to become part of a greener local economy. That means addressing their environmental compliance, resilience to rising costs and climate change, and health and safety and quality procedures to help build sustainable, high-performing businesses.

Our Green Business Membership has grown to over 100 members across Greater Manchester. In September we were delighted to award our first Green Business Platinum Award to Carillion Facilities Management in recognition of achieving their environmental targets, demonstrating leadership in sustainable practice and providing inspiration to other companies.

PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS



“I wanted an entrepreneurial team which could act independently as an enabler to mobilise all the resources of the community – public, private and voluntary.”

LORD HESELTINE, COMMENTING ON THE ORIGINS OF GROUNDWORK

Partnership working is in our DNA. It was a founding principle of our approach over thirty years ago and it’s still fundamental to the way we work now.

Businesses are increasingly recognising the role they can play in delivering social and environmental goals such as helping young people to thrive, creating more vibrant communities, tackling fuel poverty or supporting people into employment. We’ve got a long track record of working with businesses and our corporate partners value how we can join up issues, engage their staff and provide tangible benefits appreciated by customers.

In 2015/16 we have worked with local authorities, housing associations, community and faith groups, businesses, charities, government departments and agencies and all have played such an important role in everything we have achieved. We would like to take this opportunity to thank every organisation and individual who has supported our work this year. We couldn’t do it without you!

“Working with Groundwork to help restore and maintain the Ecology Park has been a real win-win project for Cargill. It is a great fit with our corporate responsibility focus areas, and gives us the opportunity to support such a worthwhile charity within our local community.”

PAUL KINGSTON, STARCHES AND SWEETENERS GENERAL MANAGER
CARGILL



Cargill

Cargill work with us to help protect and enhance Trafford Ecology Park, making it more accessible to employees of local businesses and providing more opportunities for children to benefit from environmental education.

This year, Cargill’s support meant we could run an open event for schools, attended by around 100 excited children, and complete three school gardening projects. The icing on the cake was the approval of a grant by the Cargill Foundation for our planned new classroom!

PwC

Groundwork has a national partnership with PwC and it has yielded fantastic results in Manchester. Thanks to PwC support, we’ve been able to set up a Green Team in Collyhurst, North Manchester, providing training opportunities for disadvantaged young people.

The trainees have learned a range of landscaping and grounds maintenance skills as well as social skills needed for the workplace. The community has also benefited as the Green Team have constructed a food growing site at the Lalley Centre (funded through the Big Local Partnership). This will support the local food bank and improve access to fresh fruit and vegetables in Collyhurst, which suffers from high levels of poverty.

Marks & Spencer

Groundwork supports the M&S Spark Something Good™ campaign which has contributed over 550 days of volunteer time to community projects. In Manchester, M&S volunteers gave up their time to help improve outdoor spaces for others to enjoy, including:

Trafford Ecology Park: 17 volunteers, over 100 hours of time.

Wythenshawe Campus (a school for young people with emotional, behavioural and social disorders): 17 volunteers, over 100 hours of time to improve 2500m² of land and create a community garden.

Bailey’s Wood: 18 volunteers comprising M&S, Greater Manchester Police, local councillors and young people undertaking woodland management in this community green space.

United Utilities

Groundwork has a much-valued relationship with United Utilities (UU) in the North West under the banner of United Futures. We deliver community projects linked to major infrastructure investment. Two projects this year included:

Queen’s Park is Your Park: A fun community engagement programme designed to get more people involved in the park. The project delivered 13 well-attended events, including a volunteering day supported by UU staff.

Roe Green Heritage Trail: Groundwork supported the Friends of Roe Green to explore and record the area’s local history, develop a heritage trail and install a heritage plinth. Over 90 adults and 20 young people shared ideas and memories, creating a heritage film, oral history and a digital records archive.



The board seeks to aspire to Groundwork's founding principle of making extraordinary things happen to people and places. Like other social enterprises, we face challenging times ahead. We are seeking to meet and overcome changing circumstances while remaining true to our original principles.

KEITH BARNES, CHAIR, GROUNDWORK MSSTT

Groundwork's services are needed now more than ever. We need a successful northern economy, able to cope with major challenges such as Brexit and climate change.

That future 'powerhouse' needs an environment that can attract world-class businesses, work-ready young people with 21st-century skills and a roadmap towards a low carbon future.

Our sector and local communities have faced unprecedented funding cuts since 2010. This means we have to be creative about how we fund our work and focus on growing our commercial income streams, as well as continuing to work with our public sector partners to deliver commissions and to access existing and new grant funds.

Groundwork Trusts around the country work together as part of the Groundwork Federation. Collectively, we've set ourselves ambitious targets to deliver by 2020 (see figures below). Locally, we're committed to meeting our share of those targets. We also have five local goals we're working towards that we're seeking support for from partners old and new. If you think you could help us to achieve these goals, please get in touch.



**GROUNDWORK
2020**

NATIONAL TARGETS >

2,500

open spaces looked after
or improved

15,000

people progressing into
training or employment

Local goals

> Develop new green health and wellbeing services

We are developing new services that aim to improve physical and mental health in our communities, by helping people build their levels of the 3Cs – Control, Contact and Confidence. We will continue to design and deliver therapeutic spaces which benefit those with mental health issues, sensory and mobility impairment and dementia. We will also develop services that benefit business by boosting employee health, using Trafford Ecology Park as an outdoor wellbeing venue for workers in Trafford Park and Media City.

> Upgrade and promote Trafford Ecology Park

Our relocation to the Ecology Park is part of a focus on developing this valuable green asset as a unique facility for local businesses and communities. We have a big vision involving new activities, new services and a new high-quality, sustainable meeting space and classroom constructed using our own wood sourced through sustainable woodland management of the Park.

> Focus on engaging young people with the local environment

We want to increase the work we do involving young people in environmental social action. We will champion its benefits, especially with regards to mental and physical health, community cohesion and in creating a cohort of young green leaders. The first step is to successfully deliver the ambitious Our Bright Future programme in Crumpsall and West Gorton.

> Create solutions for green space management

There's a crisis facing local parks and green spaces. Despite being a high public priority (as shown in the 'Our Manchester' strategy), budget cuts are now biting hard within local authorities and parks face a losing battle for funding with statutory core services.

We are developing a green space management service that brings together our technical expertise in land management, volunteer engagement through Friends Groups, our employment and training programmes, and our corporate partners through volunteering and sponsorship. We want to work with local authorities and other partners in Greater Manchester to help develop new ways of working that keep our parks clean, safe and attractive.

> Provide step-by-step support towards employment

We aim to offer a clear pathway of support to help people into employment, particularly our core target group of ex-offenders.

That means being able to provide intensive pre-employment support, such as Talent Match, work and training solutions via Blue Sky North, and better links with employers, especially in the construction sector, so those we work with can move on into permanent employment. We are also adapting our services to meet the needs of new client groups, especially female ex-offenders and armed forces veterans.

100,000

people helped to reduce their energy and water use

10,000

young people more motivated to learn and achieve

1 MILLION

days of voluntary action to improve local communities

OUR MISSION

to **change places** and **change lives**

PLEASE HELP US CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Groundwork Manchester, Salford, Stockport, Tameside & Trafford (MSSTT)

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